

PHILPOT

This morning Philpot has a runny eye. His glasses are already too thick for comfort. Last week's visit to the optician did nothing about the run. Perhaps he should have mentioned it. But he couldn't be sure: do you go to an optician with a thing like this -- or to a woman? It was embarrassing not knowing at his age. So he tries not to think of his rheumatism, of his next birthday. He'll be all right: don't think the water, running down his cheek, is tears.

PHILPOT UNFIT FOR ACTIVE SERVICE

Another man would have kicked the T.V. set in or killed the wife, though he suspected that to be a rumour. Another man would reminisce about

his War and use patronage and gratitude to run a second wife, a younger home.

Broken, Philpot looked back in longing to the Middle Ages of his youth where

dreaming was a sin a bright boy might commit -- the touch of something smooth, skin

unblemished by sores and evidence of rough times. He had grown ugly waiting

for the compensation he was due; and if the world continued to cheat him of it,

well, the wife would have to pay again.